

COUNCIL POLICY 3-5

SUBJECT: ELECTED OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEE INTERACTION POLICY

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to set forth standard regulating interaction between elected officials and City of Lawton employees.

BACKGROUND: In order to diligently comply with the City Charter and in order to achieve respect and integrity within the City of Lawton so that productive and professional work environments are maintained, both elected officials and employees must adhere to standards that detail proper decorum.

Governance of a city relies on the cooperative efforts of elected officials, who set policy, and city staff, who implement and administer the governing body's policies. Therefore, every effort should be made to be cooperative and show mutual respect for the contributions made by each individual for the good of the community.

Both council members and employees experience significant workloads and tremendous stress in making decisions that could impact thousands of lives. Despite these pressures, they are called upon to exhibit appropriate behavior toward each other and the public at all times. Demonstrating respect for each individual, through words and actions, is the touchstone that can help guide all public servants to do the right thing in even the most difficult situations.

SCOPE: This policy applies to all elected officials of the City of Lawton and all employees of the City of Lawton.

DEFINITIONS: Terms used in this policy are defined as follows:

- Elected Official: City of Lawton council member or Mayor
- Employee: City of Lawton staff member

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. It is the responsibility of all elected officials to review and comply with this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of the City Manager to serve as the administrative officer for City of Lawton employees, in accordance with the City Charter and implementing regulations in the City Code.
3. It is the responsibility of all City of Lawton employees to review and comply with this policy.

STANDARDS/PROCEDURES:

1. The Lawton City Charter referenced below specifically provides: “except for the purpose of inquiry, the mayor, the council, and its members shall deal with the administrative service solely through the city manager; and neither the mayor, the council, nor any member thereof may give orders on administrative matters to any subordinate of the city manager either publicly or privately.

City Council Policy 1-02 contains additional restrictions on Council members’ communications with members of the bargaining units in the police and fire departments regarding collective bargaining and related matters.

2. Limited secretarial support will be provided to elected officials by the Office of the City Manager, in accordance with directives of the City Manager, and may include the taking of calls and messages as well as the organization of mail or documentation addressed to elected officials. Requests for additional staff support, even in high priority or emergency situations, shall be directed through the city manager or his/her designee in order to maintain a professional, well-run city government.

3. Elected officials and employees shall work together and communicate in a clear, honest, professional and civil manner.

4. When in doubt about what staff contact is appropriate, elected officials should confer with the City Manager or his/her designee for direction to be sure that the contact is appropriate.

5. Unprofessional actions, gestures or language during elected official and employee interactions are prohibited and shall be reported to the City Manager and/or Mayor as appropriate.

6. Public criticisms about the performance of an individual employee(s) should not be made by elected officials. Such concerns shall be directed to the City Manager in private correspondence or conversation.

7. In accordance with Section 17-2-10-221 of Lawton City Code, no employee of the city while on duty or in uniform may work for or against, or attempt to influence, the nomination, election, or defeat of any candidate for mayor or councilmember, or the recall of the mayor or any councilmember; but this shall not prohibit the ordinary exercise of one's right to express his opinions and to vote.

8. Elected officials shall not influence or attempt to influence employees under the direction of the City Manager on the performance of their duties including making recommendations to the City Manager.

9. To maintain clear, efficient and coordinated messaging, elected officials should make reasonable efforts to consult or check with City staff before sending correspondence

concerning official City business to determine if an official city response has already been sent or is in progress.

10. The City Manager or his/her designee will investigate matters involving alleged violations of this policy by employees; the governing body or its designee will investigate matters involving alleged violations of this policy by elected officials and contract employees under their direction. No reporting person(s) or person(s) under investigation will be privy to investigative materials nor take part in decision-making concerning potential discipline. Additionally, after the complaint is made and until any subsequent investigation concludes and/or the matter is closed, neither the complainant nor the accused will be required to attend any joint meeting together [i.e. a meeting where both the complainant and accused are present] where the complaint and/or possible resolutions thereto is the subject of the meeting, unless both parties voluntarily agree to do so.

11. If an elected official is found to be in violation of this policy, the remainder of the governing body may take disciplinary action subject to compliance with the Open Meetings Acts. Such disciplinary action may include written or unwritten admonishments, warnings, reprimands or censures.

12. If an employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the City Manager or his/her designee may discipline the employee in accordance with Chapter 17 of the Lawton City Code.

REFERENCES:

11 Okl.St.Ann. § 13-101

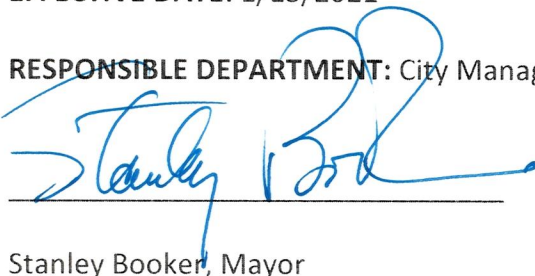
Any city or town containing a population of two thousand (2,000) inhabitants or more, as shown by the latest federal census or other census recognized by the laws of Oklahoma, may frame a charter for its own government.

Lawton City Charter Section C-2-5

City Council Policy 1-02

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/13/2021

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: City Manager/City Council



Stanley Booker, Mayor